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**SAC CITY'S ALAN GALBRAITH HONORED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE VOLUNTEER OBSERVER PROGRAM**

Recognizing 25 years of service to America, NOAA's National Weather Service has named Sac City, Iowa, resident Alan Galbraith a 2004 recipient of the agency's John Campanius Holm Award for outstanding service in the Cooperative Weather Observer Program. The award is the agency's second most prestigious and only 25 are presented each year nationwide. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

"Cooperative observers are the bedrock of weather data collection and analysis," said retired Air Force Brig. Gen. David L. Johnson, director of NOAA's National Weather Service. "Satellites, high-speed computers, mathematical models and other technological breakthroughs have brought great benefits to the nation in terms of better forecasts and warnings. But, without the century-long accumulation of accurate weather observations taken by volunteer observers, scientists could not begin to adequately describe the climate of the United States. We cannot thank Mr. Galbraith enough for his years of service to America."

Brenda Brock, meteorologist in charge of NOAA's Des Moines weather forecast office, will present the award during a ceremony to be held later this fall. Program manager Brad Fillbach of the Des Moines office nominated Galbraith for the award.

The NWS Cooperative Weather Observer Program has given scientists and researchers continuous observational data since the program's inception more than a century ago. Today, some 11,700 volunteer observers participate in the nationwide program to provide daily reports on temperature, precipitation and other weather factors such as snow depth, river levels and soil temperature.

An active community volunteer, Galbraith began as the Sac City weather observer April 19, 1979. The site at the Municipal Water Treatment Facility records daily temperature, precipitation and snow-water equivalency data. He also shares his weather data with local media, businesses and other government agencies.

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Weather records retain their importance as time goes by. Long and continuous records provide an accurate picture of a locale's normal weather, and give climatologists and others a basis for predicting future trends. These data are invaluable for scientists studying floods, droughts and heat and cold waves. At the end of each month, observers mail their records to the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) for publication in "Climatological Data" or "Hourly Precipitation Data."

The first extensive network of cooperative stations was set up in the 1890s as a result of an 1890 act of Congress that established the U.S. Weather Bureau. Many of the stations have even longer histories. John Campanius Holm's weather records, taken without benefit of instruments in 1644 and 1645, were the earliest known recorded observations in the United States.

Many historic figures have also maintained weather records, including Benjamin Franklin, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson maintained an almost unbroken record of weather observations between 1776 and 1816, and Washington took weather observations just a few days before he died. The Jefferson and Holm awards are named for these weather observation pioneers.

NOAA's National Weather Service is the primary source of weather data, forecasts and warnings for the United States and its territories. NOAA's National Weather Service operates the most advanced weather and flood warning and forecast system in the world, helping to protect lives and property and enhance the national economy.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of the Nation's coastal and marine resources.

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On the Web:

NOAA: <http://www.noaa.gov>

National Weather Service: <http://www.weather.gov>

NWS Cooperative Observer Program: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/coop/index.thm>